

**OPEN LETTER TO ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY THE LEGACY OF THE  
EVENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS  
FROM LORD ROBIN EAMES AND DENIS BRADLEY  
CO-CHAIRS OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON THE PAST**

In June this year we were asked by Government to co-chair an independent consultative group to seek a consensus on the best way to deal with the legacy of the past 40 years in Northern Ireland.

The core group of eight people represents a cross section of the community in Northern Ireland and over the next year we will be working toward presenting our report to Government. It will contain recommendations on ways to support Northern Ireland society in the building of a shared future that can be enjoyed by everyone.

Peter Hain, who was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the group was formed, said "The Government cannot tell the people of Northern Ireland how they should deal with the past – only the people themselves can try to answer that question."

With these words in mind we have now launched our public engagement exercise. We are seeking the views of individuals and groups on ways to achieve that shared future and how we can move forward and enjoy a society that offers stability and a continued sense of optimism.

Our aim is to hear the widest possible range of views and we will carefully consider all requests from people who wish to meet us. We are also very aware that there will be many people living or working in the Republic of Ireland, in England and elsewhere that will also have been affected by the past. To those people we would say that your views are equally important to us and we would be pleased to hear from you.

While the timeframe of "the past 40 years" was used when our work was commissioned, this should not be seen as a barrier to anyone who feels that they can make a positive contribution.

Much work in this area has already been undertaken by individuals, groups, non-governmental organisations, statutory bodies, and Governments. Many have already contacted us and we are grateful for their valuable contribution.

Working together we can help ensure that we move towards a society that has not forgotten the past but, equally, does not allow it to be a barrier to a shared future. If you or your group have a perspective on the past, the lessons to be learned, and importantly suggestions on the steps that might be taken to support Northern Ireland society in the future, we would urge you to make those views known to us.

We would ask that submissions, which must be in writing, reach us by the closing date of **7<sup>th</sup> December**. These can be sent to **The Secretary to Consultative Group on the Past, 20 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8GD** or by email, [secretary@cgpni.org](mailto:secretary@cgpni.org).

If you would like to request a meeting with the Group we would ask that you advise us of this by 5th October.